

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5983

As Passed House - Amended:

April 14, 2005

Title: An act relating to professional certification of teachers.

Brief Description: Regarding professional certification of teachers.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Schmidt, Esser, Delvin and Benson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/17/05, 3/30/05 [DPA];

Appropriations: 4/2/05 [DPA(ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/14/05, 95-1.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Transfers from the State Board of Education to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) rulemaking for the professional certification of teachers and for the approval of the programs that prepare teachers for that certification.
- Describes some of the professional certification issues the PESB must address.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative P. Sullivan, Vice Chair.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Education. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority

Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: Denise Graham (786-7137).

Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE) adopts rules for the certification of educators and educational administrators, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The rules are then implemented by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The SBE has adopted a two-tier certification system for new teachers. The first tier, which is granted upon completion of an approved college teacher preparation program that leads to either a baccalaureate or graduate degree, is called a residency certificate. This certificate is valid for five years. The second tier certificate is now called a professional certificate. Beginning with September 1, 2000, all beginning teachers and most experienced teachers from out-of-state are required to earn the professional certificate within five years of obtaining residency certificates. A two-year extension may be granted if the candidates are making progress toward the professional certificate.

This process is different in many significant ways from the process for the previously required continuing certificate. The professional certificate is performance-based. It relies heavily on the production of school/classroom-based performance indicators that are evaluated by members of the teacher's professional growth team. Professional growth team means a team comprised of the candidate, a colleague specified by the candidate, a college or university advisor, and a representative from the school district in which the candidate teaches. The continuing certificate was based on earning 45 credits beyond the bachelor's degree.

During the interim, several legislators met with groups of teachers to discuss the new requirements. Although the new professional certification process is working well for some candidates, for others the process faces unresolved challenges that include wide variations in the quality, relevance, and cost of different certification programs.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The agency responsible for the professional certification of teachers must adopt rules for the approval of programs leading to that certification. The rules must be written to allow the maximum program choice, portability, and efficiency for applicants.

Under the rules, professional certification will not be required until for any individual before the fifth year following the receipt of a continuing employment contract. After five years, the individual will receive a two year extension if the teacher is enrolled in a program leading to certification. Teachers with certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards will automatically receive professional certification. Teachers who are currently

enrolled in or participating in a program leading to professional certification may continue the program under the administrative rules in place when the teacher began the program.

The rules will create criteria under which educational service districts may offer professional certification programs, beginning August 31, 2007. In addition, the rules will encourage institutions of higher education to offer professional certificate coursework for continuing education credit hours and permit them to offer certification as part of a Master's Degree program. The rules must also require the provision of a liaison between approved programs and those school districts with applicants for professional certification.

The agency must identify an expedited professional certification process for out-of-state certificated teachers with five years or more of teaching experience. It may require those teachers to take a course in or demonstrate understanding of the state's academic standards.

An evaluation process for approved programs must be identified. By November 1, 2005, the agency must provide to the legislative education committees, a preliminary report on the criteria to be used in the evaluation. The elements of the evaluation process are described. The agency must identify:

- (1) a process for awarding conditional approval of a program;
- (2) a less intensive three-year evaluation cycle once a program receives full approval unless the agency has reason to intensify the evaluation;
- (3) a method for investigating programs that have received numerous complaints from students enrolled in the program and from students who have recently completed the program;
- (4) a method for investigating programs at the PESB's discretion; and
- (5) a method for using program completer satisfaction responses and educator impact data in making the evaluation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Education) (In support of engrossed substitute) The professional certification process is not working as it was originally intended. Teachers and school administrators are frustrated and discouraged by the lack of clarity that exists around the program's requirements. Teachers are also frustrated by the high cost of most of the programs and by the lack of substance of many of the requirements included within them. This legislation will help ensure that the programs are evaluated more frequently and successfully. It will also transfer rulemaking for professional certification to the PESB, the appropriate board for this activity.

(With concerns on engrossed substitute) The legislation splits the responsibility for initial and professional certification between the PESB and the SBE. This division will not help

streamline or clarify the certification process, it may well add to the confusion teachers, school districts, and colleges are experiencing. The SBE has adopted rules that address many of the issues covered by the legislation. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is working with institutions of higher education to ensure the colleges are addressing the areas of concern. The legislation is no longer necessary.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) It is critical that this bill continue so that the professional certification process becomes meaningful. Although the recent work of the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is appreciated, this legislation is still needed.

Testimony Against: (Education) (Opposed to engrossed substitute) The professional certification process promotes reflective thinking and helps teachers grow into great educators. Although the programs have had some implementation challenges, the colleges are committed to fixing the problems that teachers have identified. They are working on creating lower cost programs, offering courses online, during summers, and on weekends, and are creating a system that allows students to have their pro-cert credits accepted by different institutions of higher education. They have also embraced a fast-track for experienced teachers from out-of-state. The bill is unnecessary and may well hinder the process now in place to improve the programs. The Legislature should hold off for a short time to see if the current process for solving the problems will work as expected. If the programs haven't improved significantly by this fall, then take action next year. Certification responsibilities should not be removed from the SBE and should not be divided between two agencies.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) This bill is no longer necessary. But if you move the bill forward, take governance out of it. Splitting professional certification from other aspects of teacher preparation doesn't make sense.

Persons Testifying: (Education) (In support of engrossed substitute) Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board.

(With concerns on engrossed substitute) Bobbie May, State Board of Education; and Arlene Hett, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed to engrossed substitute) Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; and Judy Mitchell, Washington State University.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) (In support) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

(Opposed) Megan Atkinson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Other) Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educators Standards Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Education) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.